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Bugged! from Scary Stories for Stormy Nights

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FREE IN
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Tattoos!



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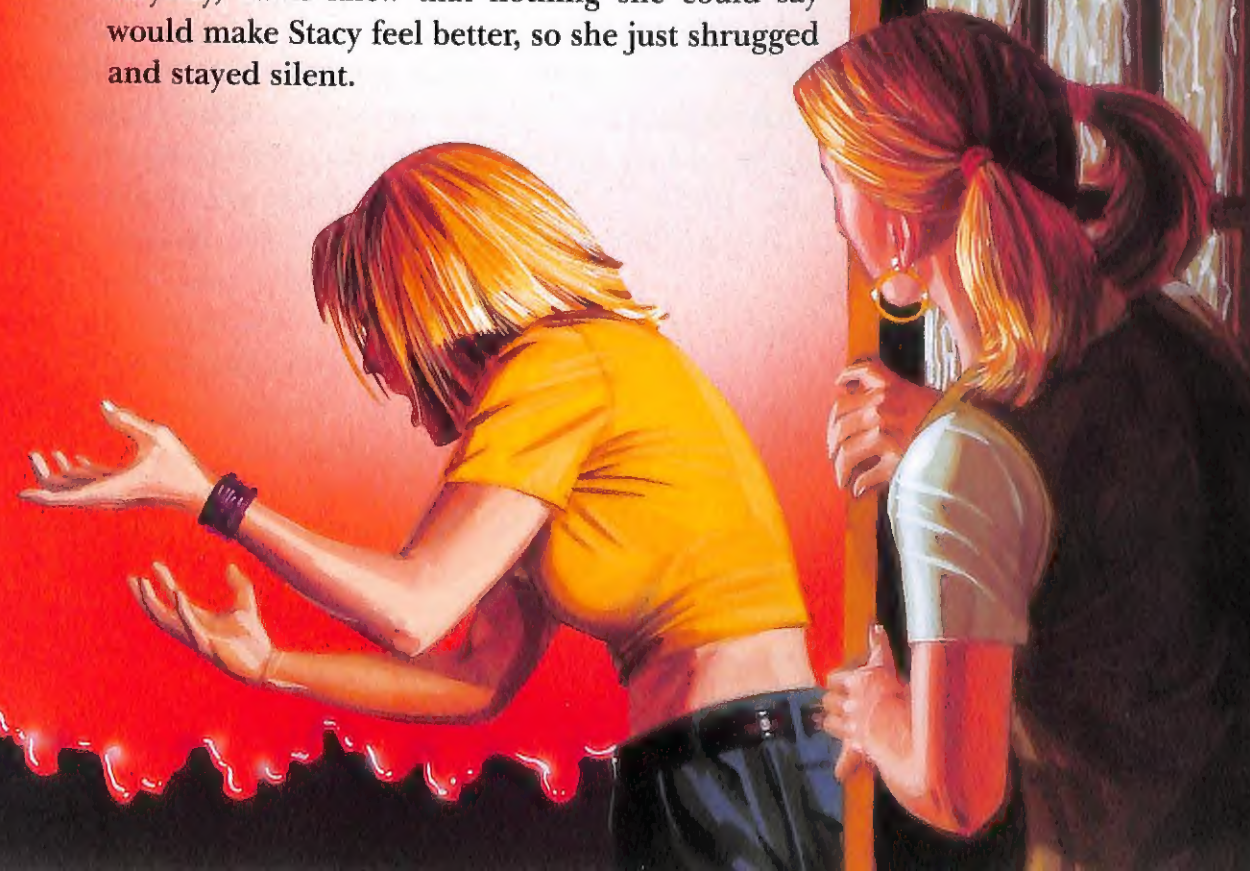


arging into her best friend's house, Stacy said, "I
can't believe it! Wade and some of his friends are
going camping – on their own! I'm never allowed to
do anything on my own!"

Fawn closed the door and allowed her friend
to stomp around the room for a moment. Then she calmly
pointed out that Wade had turned seventeen and could
already drive. "Besides," Fawn asked, "since when
have you been interested in camping?"

"The point is, I'm just as responsible as Wade
is," Stacy declared. "Twice as responsible!"

Fawn bit back a smile. Stacy and her brother
had a very stormy relationship – nothing like the
friendly one she had with her older sister, Mattie.
Anyway, Fawn knew that nothing she could say
would make Stacy feel better, so she just shrugged
and stayed silent.



And then she had an idea. "Why not ask your folks if we could go camping if my big sister came along to keep an eye on us?"

Stacy stopped scowling and looked at her friend. "Would Mattie agree to do it?"

Fawn grinned. "She might. She likes camping, and I don't think she's doing anything this weekend."

Stacy's mood brightened. "That'd be great! Find out if she'll do it first. If she says yes, then I'll ask my mum and dad."



The next day, Stacy was in the field behind her house, studying a colony of ants swarming all over a dead cockroach, when she heard Fawn calling her from the front of the house. Stacy waved to her friend, who was picking her way across the field.

"What are you doing?" Fawn called out.

"Watching some ants," Stacy replied. Then she said, "Did you ask your sister?"

Fawn nodded. "Yep. And she said yes!"

"All right!" Stacy yelled, punching the air in triumph. "Now for the really hard part – getting my parents to agree."

"Why not talk to your mum now, while we're on a roll?" suggested Fawn.

Stacy considered this. "No, she's

marking some papers. I'll ask her after dinner, when she's more relaxed. Then she can help me convince my dad."

"Sounds like a plan," Fawn said. "Call me later and let me know what happens."

As it turned out, Stacy's parents seemed ready to accept the plan.

"Actually," Stacy lied, "Mattie's been wanting to go camping for ages. She's got the whole trip planned out, but I said I'd have to ask you two first." She looked pleadingly at her mother.

"Oh, I didn't realise it was Mattie's idea," her mum said, stifling a smile. "Where does Mattie want to go camping?"

Stacy paused. She hadn't thought it through that far and didn't know any campsites in the area except for the one where her brother was going.

"Rock Hollow," she finally said, hoping her parents hadn't noticed her hesitation.

"What a coincidence," said Stacy's dad, looking at her mum and smiling. Then he shrugged. "Well, if it's all right with your mum, it's OK with me – especially since Wade will be up there this weekend, too."

"Up where?" asked Stacy's brother, coming into the living room. Stacy gritted her teeth – her older brother could quite possibly ruin everything.

"Stacy, Fawn and Mattie are thinking of going up to Rock Hollow this weekend," their dad told Wade. "Your mother and I reckon it'll be OK as you'll be there, too."

"What?!" Wade said, obviously shocked. "Well, don't expect me to baby-sit them."

"We don't need you to baby-sit us," Stacy shot back.

"No one's asking you to, Wade," their mum said, calmly.

"Great," Wade said, throwing his hands in the air as he turned and left the room.

Stacy's father looked at her. "Mattie's how old again?"

"Seventeen," Stacy replied. "Like Wade."

"Mattie's a responsible girl," Stacy's mum butted in. "As far as I'm concerned they can go." She looked sternly at Stacy. "But I want to know exactly where you intend to camp and exactly when you plan to come back. I shall also want to check everything you pack before you go!"

Stacy was so happy she would have agreed to anything. "Thanks, Mum! Thanks, Dad!" she called over her shoulder, already halfway up the stairs on her way to call Fawn.



The trip was arranged, and by mid-morning on Saturday, Stacy, Fawn, and Mattie were pulling into the entrance of Rock Hollow in Mattie's beaten-up Volkswagen Beetle. From where they parked, the three girls hiked for at least two hours.

Finally Mattie stopped in a clearing under some tall pine trees. "Home sweet home for the next two days," she declared. "Unless you'd like to go back," she added with a straight face.

"No way," Fawn said, shrugging off her backpack and throwing herself to the ground. "I'm exhausted."

"Me too," gasped Stacy. "I'm not about to go anywhere – not after that slog to get here." She slapped her hand against her neck and moaned, "Oh, wonderful. We have fellow campers – mosquitoes!"

"Did you know there are over 2,600 kinds of mosquito?" Fawn asked, sounding exactly like a science teacher.



Stacy scowled at her, then turned to Mattie. "Is your sister always so helpful?"

"Yeah, she's full of useless information," Mattie said. "But much as I'd like to hear more fascinating facts about mosquitoes, we have to set up camp."

With that, the three girls went to work putting up their tents – one for Mattie and one for Stacy and Fawn. Then they sorted out their cooking gear and began looking round for firewood.

When they'd finished, they wolfed down the sandwiches they'd brought, and Mattie said that she wanted to read for a while.

Stacy and Fawn stared at each other, then burst out laughing. They hadn't a clue what they were meant to do. Neither had been camping before and now that they were, they felt kind of, well, lost.

Mattie rolled her eyes and said, "What a pair of goons." She positioned herself against a tree and opened her book. "Listen, there is plenty of daylight left.

You guys are on your own for a while... why don't you go exploring or something?"

"Good idea," Stacy said.

Fawn agreed. "Maybe we can look for some wild flowers," she suggested.

"These woods can get kind of tricky," Mattie warned, "so don't go too far, OK?"

"We won't," Fawn replied as she and Stacy wandered off.

For a while, they walked along in silence, with Fawn stopping to look at nearly every flower they came across.

"Wow," she said in awe, "it really is beautiful up here."

Stacy nodded absently, more interested in searching for signs of animal life. But she soon started to think that the only animals alive round there were relatives of the mosquito she'd killed earlier! Every second she heard their high-pitched whine in her ear, and it was driving her crazy.

"Aargh!" she cried out, swatting the air. "I'm really sick of these things!"

"It must be all the rain we had this year," Fawn said. "Mosquitoes like to lay their eggs in a moist area."

Stacy turned an angry glare on her friend. "How come you know so much about mosquitoes?" she wanted to know.

"I did an essay on them for science class last year. Remember how they got to be so bad that everyone was talking about zapping the countryside with insecticide?"

Stacy did remember. That had been a horrible spring, and she had spent as much time as she could indoors.

"Well, it looks as if they're going to be

just as bad this year," Fawn predicted. "And it looks like just about all of them are breeding at Rock Hollow." She laughed. "I wonder if Wade's getting eaten alive, too."



As the day grew longer, Fawn began to agree with Stacy's prediction. The mosquitoes were truly horrible. At first, the two girls tried to walk very fast, hoping that the insects would not land on a moving target. But that idea did not work, and soon their hands and arms were in constant motion, waving away the swarms of horrible, whining bloodsuckers.

When they got back to camp they found that Mattie had been having the same problem and had retreated into her tent. Stacy and Fawn did the same, diving into their tent and firmly zipping it shut.

"Oh no," Stacy cried, spotting a few of the pesky little creatures buzzing around inside their tent. "It's full of bugs in here, too!"

So she and Fawn embarked on a search-and-destroy mission for every mosquito that had slipped into the tent.

Finally, when their tent was apparently bug-free, the two girls spread insect repellent over every centimetre of their exposed skin. "This is really crazy," Stacy said, rubbing some repellent on her ankles. "I smell like a pest exterminator."

"Phew!" Fawn

agreed. "I don't know what's worse – the bug cream or the bugs!" She peered outside. "Wow!" she exclaimed. "Check that out!" Stacy climbed over her friend to take a quick look through the entrance flap of the tent. Outside, she could see clouds of horrible insects circling round the campsite.

"Hey, Miss Expert!" Mattie yelled from her tent, "What do you suggest we do?"

Stacy looked at Fawn. "Well? Mattie's right... you *are* the resident mossie expert!"

Fawn shrugged. "I don't know," she said, defensively. "But the females need blood in order to produce their eggs. So I'm afraid they'll stay around as long as we do."

Stacy looked worried. "But how do they know that we're still here?"

"Lots of different ways," Fawn said.

"Our body heat, the way we smell – maybe they can even tell we're here by the carbon dioxide that we breathe out."

"What was that?" yelled Mattie from

the other tent. "Talk louder! If I'm about to be eaten alive, I want to know why."

"I read somewhere that by following the carbon dioxide in the air, a mosquito can track the breath of a sleeping person back to its source," Fawn said, raising her voice.

"What does that have to do with anything?" asked Stacy, getting a little annoyed with Fawn, the Mosquito Woman.

"What she's saying," Mattie concluded, "is that they're hungry, they know we're here, and they won't go away." Fawn bit her lip. "Uh, yeah. That about sums it up."

Stacy stared outside the tent door. The swarm seemed to have got bigger since they had taken cover inside.

"Just our luck. Wade and his stupid friends probably don't have a single mosquito bugging them," she thought. "Look, you guys," she said aloud, "I didn't come camping to spend the whole time trapped inside this tent."

"So, what are you saying?" asked Mattie.

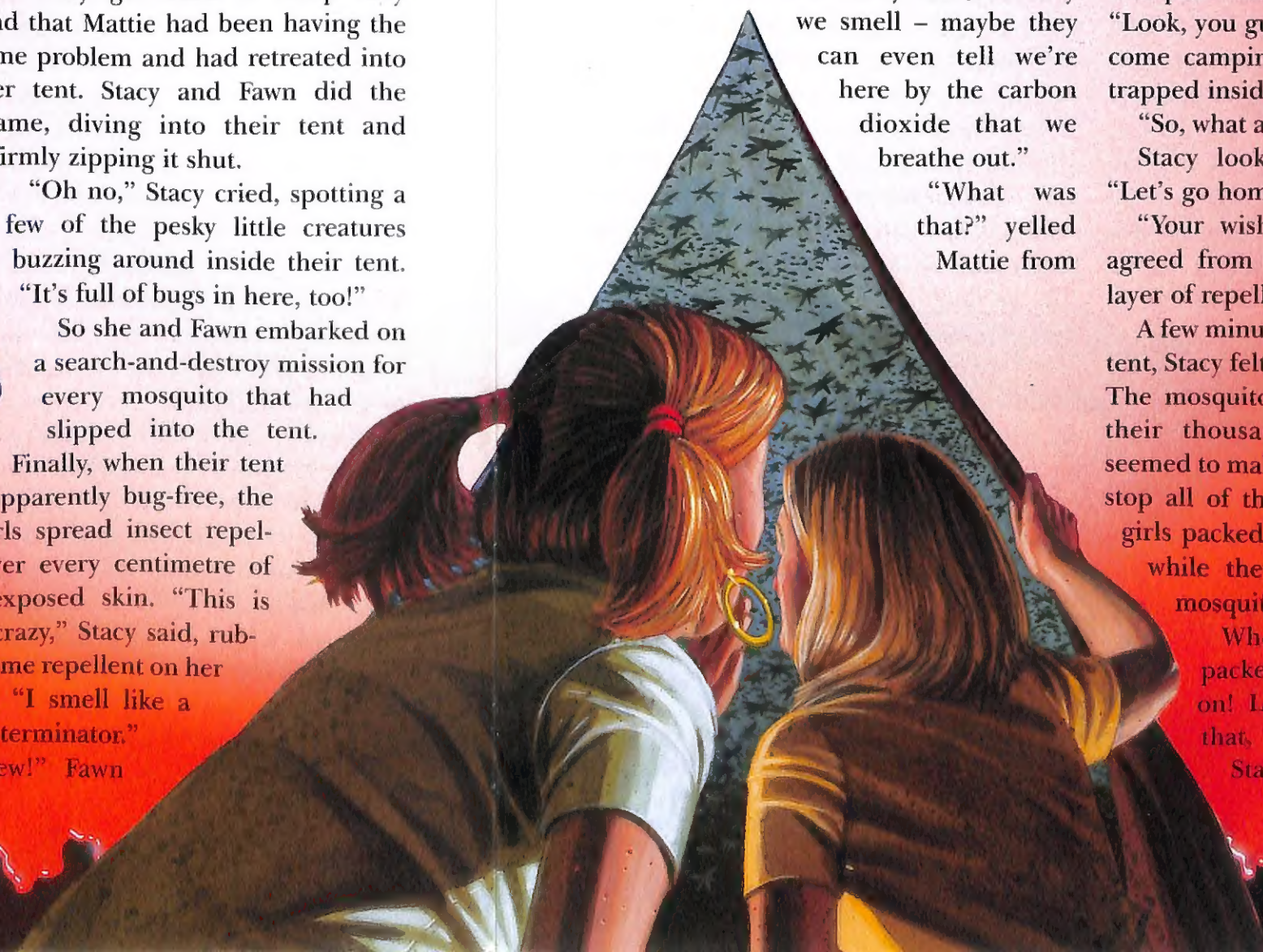
Stacy looked at Fawn, who nodded.

"Let's go home," they said in unison.

"Your wish is my command," Mattie agreed from her tent. "Slap on another layer of repellent, then let's pack up!"

A few minutes after stepping out of their tent, Stacy felt they'd made a wise decision. The mosquitoes must have numbered in their thousands. The insect repellent seemed to make them hesitate, but it didn't stop all of them. Squeaking in pain, the girls packed the tents as best they could while they danced around, slapping mosquitoes dead by the dozen.

When they were just about packed up, Mattie yelled, "Come on! Let's get out of here!" With that, she broke into a run, with Stacy and Fawn close behind.



At first, it seemed as if the girls had left the mosquitoes behind. Relieved, they slowed down to a quick walk. But within minutes the swarm had found them again.

"This is horrible!" Fawn cried, the tiny, blood-bloated bodies buzzing round her.

"Let's try another route," suggested Mattie, waving her hands in front of her face. "This trail may go through a wet area or something. Maybe that's why they are so thick here." She strode off to one side, Stacy and Fawn following closely.



For a moment, it seemed that Mattie had guessed correctly, for the insect cloud thinned out to an almost bearable level.

"That was incredible," Stacy gasped, looking behind them. "We're going to itch for a month."

"And you mean to tell me those were all females?" Mattie asked her sister. Fawn nodded. "I think so. And it looks like this year the problem is even worse."

Suddenly, as if they had heard Fawn's words, an enormous swarm of the hideous insects descended on them again. This time the cloud of bugs was even thicker than before. What was worse, the repellent no longer seemed to have any effect at all.

Within seconds, the mosquitoes covered them like a blanket and the three girls soon looked more like three shambling mounds of tiny, black bodies than human beings.

Fawn finally had to close her eyes in order to protect them and was forced to stop

walking. All she could hear was the whine of thousands of wings in her ears. "Mattie!" she screamed. "What should..."

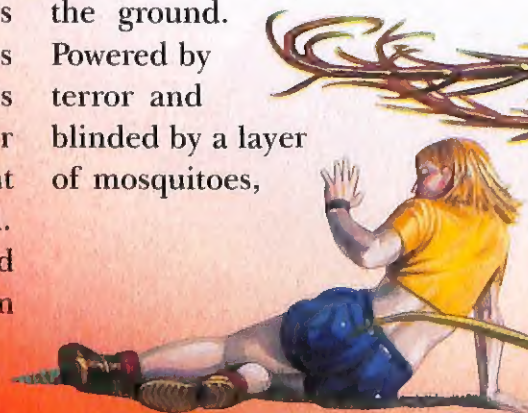
But Fawn couldn't finish her sentence. For after finding fresh, new territory suddenly opened to them, the mosquitoes swarmed into the horrified girl's mouth.

Mattie, who had heard her sister scream, knew better than to open her mouth. She swept the winged bodies off her face with her hand and managed to clear her vision enough to see a shape lying on the ground next to her, a shape that was her sister.

"Run!" Mattie's brain screamed at her as she became aware of millions of tiny pinpricks stabbing into her flesh, each one carrying away a little more of her life. But it was too late to run. For even as Mattie's brain told her legs to move, she, too, was collapsing to the ground while the hungry mosquitoes continued to feed.

Stacy also heard Fawn's scream and the choking sound her friend made as she tried to breathe through the mass of tiny bodies in her mouth. Then she thought she heard a thud, as if a body had fallen to the ground.

Powered by terror and blinded by a layer of mosquitoes,



Stacy managed to take off as fast as her mosquito-covered legs would carry her.

Miraculously, she didn't fall. Even more miraculous was the fact that she seemed to have left the mosquitoes behind. Rubbing her hands over her face, trying to clear her vision, Stacy raced on. She didn't care where she was going as long as it was far away from those horrible bugs.

Finally, running out of breath, Stacy came to an abrupt halt at the edge of a marshy pond. She had no idea how long she had been running, but she knew her lungs would burst if she took another step. Falling to her knees, she sucked air into her lungs in desperate, ragged gasps. She tried to tell herself that her friends were all right, but she knew they were probably dead. Despairing, she burst into tears.

"I'll get you," Stacy cried into the air. "I'll get you all for killing my friends. I'll cover every scrap of land with poison!"

As the sobs tore from Stacy's throat, they masked the approach of the creature rising from the scum-covered water behind her. But as the drone of its giant wings grew louder, Stacy became aware of its huge

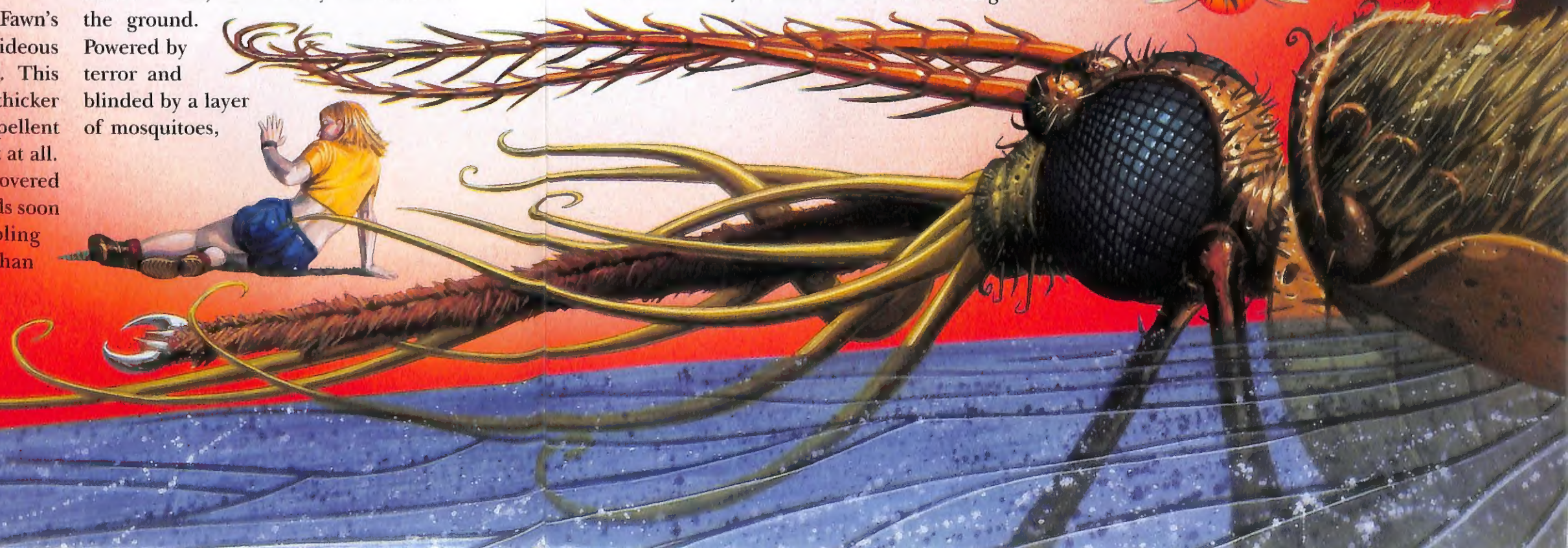
presence. Almost paralysed with fear, she slowly turned to face the pond.

There, a truly monstrous mosquito – as big as a helicopter – hovered above the water. Its abdomen was grossly swollen with what Stacy was certain was another generation of offspring, a generation that their monster mother would need to feed with an enormous amount of blood.

Stacy slowly rose to her feet, willing her legs to make one last, terrified run for her life. But as she did so, the beating of the giant mosquito's wings bent the marsh grass down, uncovering a final horror for Stacy's eyes. Wade and his friends had also been attacked by the mosquitoes.

As she stared at the shrivelled body of her brother, now completely sucked dry of blood, Stacy's heart began to beat wildly. Frantic, she looked round for an escape route... but then the mutant mosquito descended upon its next meal.

THE END



OUR HAUNTED WORLD

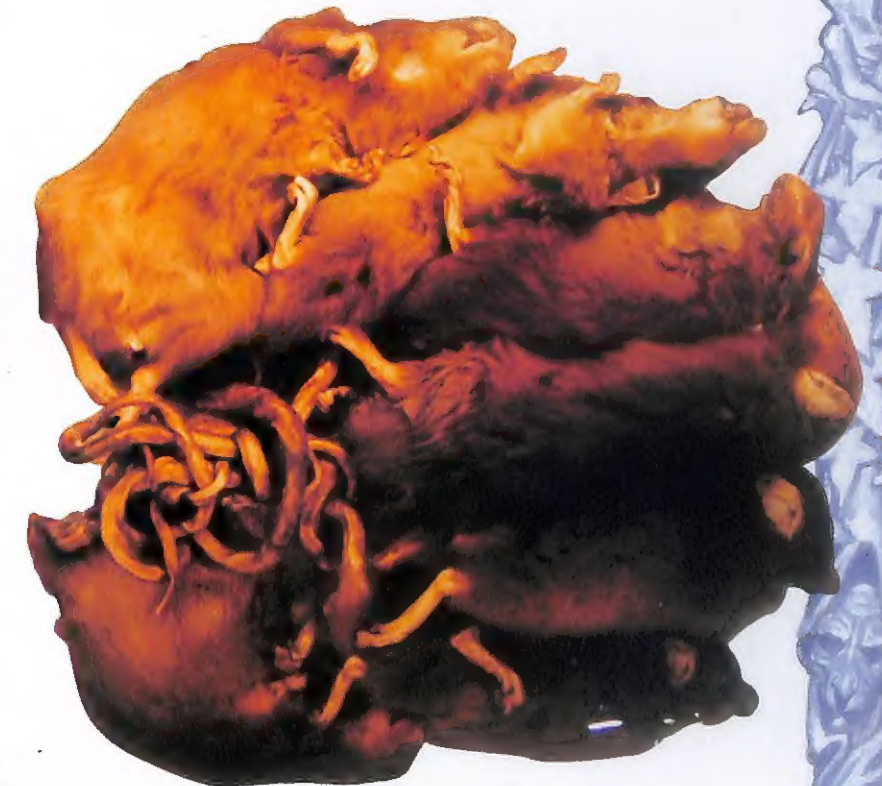
Read on for a revolting riddle and some scary stories from Germany.



▲ DEADLY WITCH HUNTS
People charged with being witches were tortured into making a confession and then burnt at the stake.

THE WITCHES' HAMMER

During the Middle Ages, people often blamed witches for things they couldn't understand. Witches were believed to have special powers because they had made a pact with the devil. As well as casting spells on their enemies, people believed that witches could change themselves into animals, and even fly. In 1486, two German priests wrote a book called *The Witches' Hammer*, which told people how to recognise a witch. As a result, many innocent people were falsely accused in horrifying witch hunts all across Europe.



POLTERGEIST ONE

Poltergeists are noisy ghosts that frequently throw things about. In 1858, a farmer at Bingen was subjected to a terrifying poltergeist attack. Fires broke out mysteriously, stones pelted his home and an accusing voice announced his evil deeds to the world.

DEADLY SONG

The Rhine river has its very own water nymph, called the Lorelei. She is said to guard a great treasure and to sing bewitchingly with the intention of luring sailors to their death. The Lorelei's treasure is found inside a cave in a cliff that people once believed was guarded by dwarfs. The echoes heard inside the cavern were said to be their voices.



A RIDDLE OF RATS

A group of rats whose tails are tangled together is known as a 'rat king'. How they become tangled is a mystery. One theory is that young rats, if very tightly packed together in their nest, could get their tails matted together with dirt and excrement. They all scramble off in different directions, but can never escape from each other and finally starve to death. A spectacular rat king involving 32 rats tied together (above) was found in Buchheim in 1828.

A WATCHFUL EYE

A friend of a friend told this tale of neighbours living near Germany's Black Forest...



1 When a couple from Berlin moved into a village with their beloved twin German Shepherd dogs, the locals weren't exactly thrilled.



2 The villagers hated the dogs, who spent all day racing around and romping noisily in the garden.



3 In time, the couple became friendly with their next-door neighbour and asked him if he'd feed the dogs while they were away on a week's holiday.

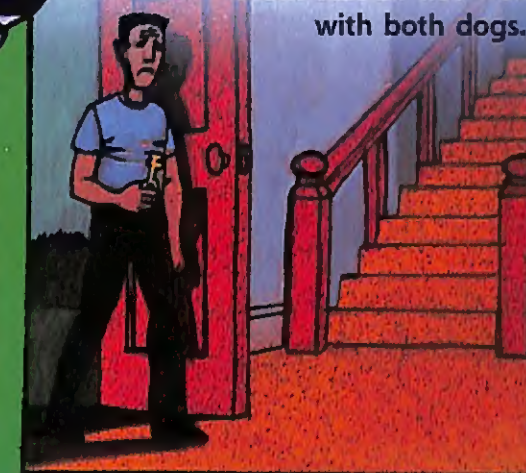


4 Although he was still scared of the dogs, he agreed. But instead of feeding them in their kitchen, he pushed bowls of dog food under the garden fence every day. It felt safer!

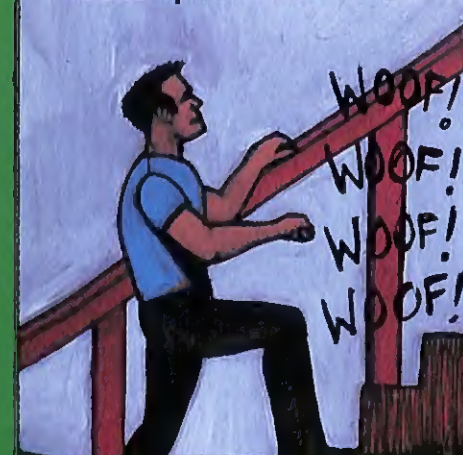
5 On the third day, only one dog came to eat and the neighbour wondered if one of the dogs was ill.



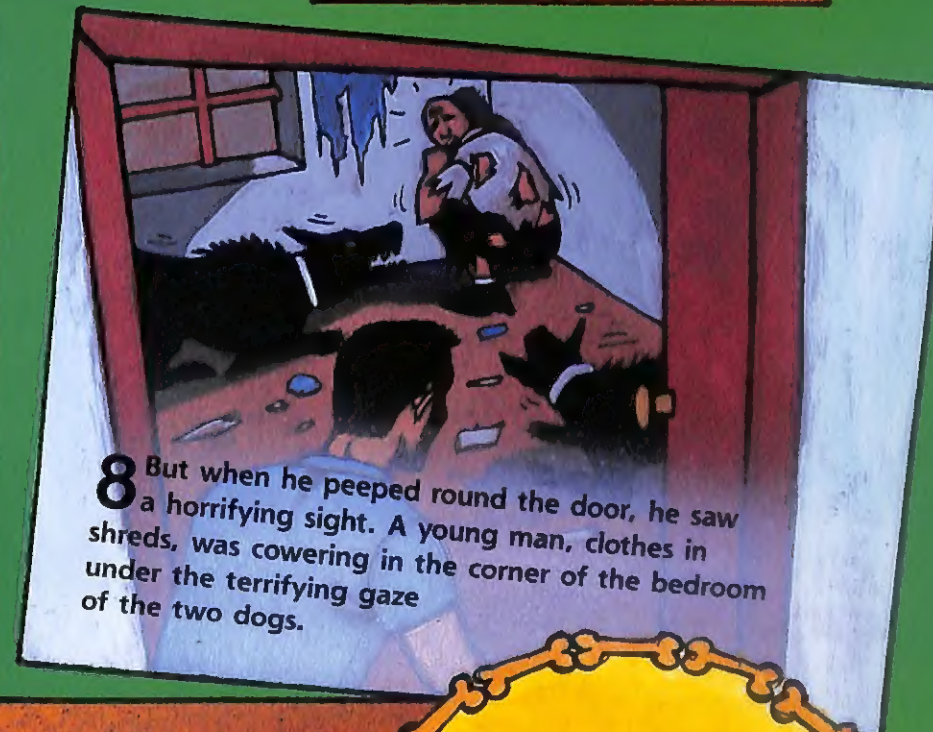
6 Next day, when only one dog came to eat the food again, he decided to go next door and check that all was well with both dogs.



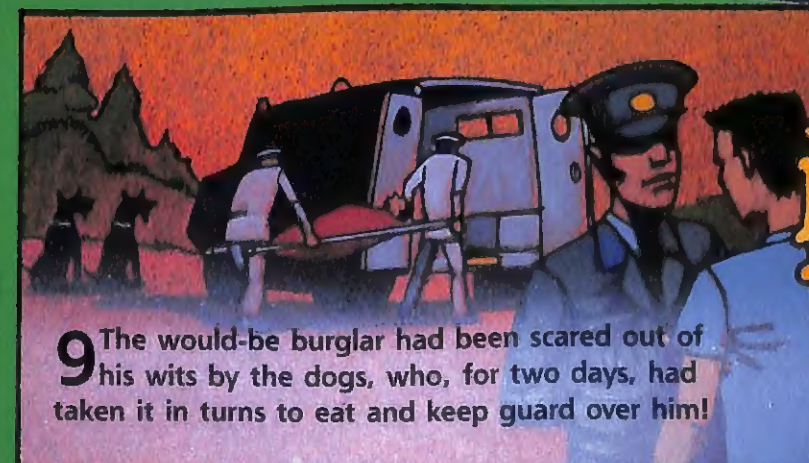
7 As he crept upstairs, he was relieved to hear the two dogs apparently playing in the upstairs bedroom.



8 But when he peeped round the door, he saw a horrifying sight. A young man, clothes in shreds, was cowering in the corner of the bedroom under the terrifying gaze of the two dogs.



9 The would-be burglar had been scared out of his wits by the dogs, who, for two days, had taken it in turns to eat and keep guard over him!



PS It's very unlikely that the young guy would ever have tried house burglary again. He was so unhinged by his canine captors that he was unable to appear in court!



THE LOCH NESS MONSTER

Special Investigation File: 10

Subject: evaluation of the evidence for the existence of the creature known as The Loch Ness Monster.

SpineChiller creates a file

Archive information: Sightings

In AD 565, after a swimmer in Loch Ness was killed by a monster, Saint Colomba ordered the beast to leave. This was the first recorded sighting of the creature, later nicknamed 'Nessie'.

All was quiet until 1930, when three fishermen saw a huge, humpy, slithery beast in the water. Then, in 1934, a six-metre-long creature lumbered across a lochside road, giving a young motorcyclist the shock of his life!

When the newspapers ran these stories, Nessie became world famous. Since then, hundreds of reliable witnesses have seen the mystery monster.

Geological update:

What is known about Loch Ness?

Loch is the Scottish word for lake, and Loch Ness lies in the north of Scotland, near the town of Inverness. It is the deepest loch in Britain, thought to be 290 metres deep in places.

In 1997, a much deeper part, which could be an enormous cave, was discovered. This would be the perfect hideaway for large, camera-shy monsters! Frustrated scientists can't take good pictures in the dark, cloudy water, but many now agree that there's more than enough oxygen and food in Loch Ness to feed a whole family of monsters!

Photo-Lab report:

Monster Descriptions

From photos and eye-witness reports, we know that Nessie is between six and eight metres long, with a long neck, greyish-brown skin, a small head – possibly with two small horns – four small, diamond-shaped flippers, a long tail and several humps on its back. It most resembles a plesiosaur, a water-dwelling dinosaur thought to have died out 70 million years ago!



Evidence no: 10/1
Italian magazine illustration, 1961

Evidence no: 10/3
Famous photo of Nessie, taken in May, 1977



**Scientific survey:
Mud Messes Nessie Pix**
The Loch Ness Investigation Bureau was set up in 1962. Its job was to search for evidence of Nessie. Members used the very latest lighting and sonar equipment. Sonar allows a picture of an unseen object to be built up by bouncing sound waves off it. In 1972, an American team took over the research. Something very big, moving just as Nessie would, appeared on their sonar scanner. Sadly, whatever it was stirred up so much mud that none of the sonar pictures came out clearly.



Evidence no: 10/5
Underwater photo, taken by Dr Rines, head of the US research team



Evidence no: 10/4
Cage created to hold any live specimens found in Loch Ness

Conclusion

Until a Loch Ness monster is captured alive – or at least convincingly caught on film, strolling through the lochside grass – plenty of people will deny its existence. But it's possible that a family of shy, plesiosaur-like creatures lives in the depths of this great lake.



Evidence no: 10/6
Loch Ness souvenirs

Confidential



Evidence no: 10/2
View of Loch Ness

CLASSIC



SERIAL

Chapter 1

SQUIRE TOBY'S WILL

Retold from the story by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu

On the old York-London road, south of Applebury, stands a large – and now dilapidated – black-and-white house. The name of the ancient house is Gylingden Hall. Tall hedges and ancient elms shroud the place from the view of passers-by. Slightly further up the road, there is a small Saxon chapel, for centuries the burying place of the Marston family. Like the abandoned house, the cemetery is neglected and desolate. Throughout the undisturbed valley in which Gylingden Hall lies, there is an air of grand melancholy.

When he died, the old Squire of Gylingden Hall, Toby Marston, left behind him a will that set his two sons at deadly odds. The elder brother, Scroope, had

never been a favourite of the old Squire, who had often wished the 'hump-backed rascal', as he called him, out of the way. The younger brother, Charles Marston, was handsome, could 'drink with the best of them and knew what a horse was'.

When drunk, Squire Toby had vowed that Scroope would not inherit Gylingden. And when he lay cold and quiet in the Saxon churchyard, it was discovered that his will did indeed leave Gylingden to Charles. Scroope was furious. The family property had *always* gone to the eldest son.

Scroope challenged the will in court and attacked his brother at every opportunity. He wanted vengeance and was willing to wreck himself to bring his brother down –

but he failed in all his attempts to do so.

Years flew by. As the feud grew, the brothers' hatred for each other bit deeper and deeper. Neither of them married.

In his 44th year, Charles fell into a coma after a bad fall from his horse. Although he was not expected to recover, he eventually did. However, it was apparent that the accident had changed him in two ways: his broken hip meant he would never ride a horse again, and he now appeared to be haunted by anxiety.



Tom Cooper seemed always to have been butler of Gylingden Hall. He had remained loyal to the household for the 20 years since Squire Toby's death, even though it had fallen on hard times. Now he was lean, stooped and surly with everyone but 'the young Squire'.

After his accident, Charles fell into a solitary way of life. He seldom raised his eyes and took on an appearance of indescribable gloom. Cooper could not stand these dark moods. Finally, he said to him one day, "There's something on your mind and you'll feel better if you tell someone what it is."

The Squire, glad that Cooper had asked him what was wrong, revealed a secret that he had thought he would never be able to share with anyone.

"When I was in a coma," he said, "I was with my father." He looked the old butler in the eye and repeated, "I was with him, Cooper. Either I was dead or he was alive. I don't know which. But I thought I'd never escape. He was bullying me about... God knows what. I would give my right hand to know. Perhaps something to do with that villain Scroope swearing in court that I'd stolen papers proving him to be the rightful owner of Gylingden. On my oath, it's not true. Scroope vowed he'd see me

hanged for it, though. I think that's what was troubling my father. You're not to tell a soul of this, Cooper."

"God forbid," said old Cooper. He thought for a while, then suggested, "There might be another reason, sir. It might ha' been about how the old Master's been treated since his death, having no stone on his grave an' all."

"Of course! I hadn't thought of that," gasped Charles, leaping out of his chair. "Come with me now."

As they approached the Marston family burying place in silence, through the melancholy light of an autumn sunset, Charles at last spoke again.

"Cooper, do you know which of the dogs was howling last night?" he asked.

"Not one o' ours, Master Charlie. It was a white dog with a black head. Howlin' up at the windows, he was. I'd have liked to throw something at him."

Suddenly, the Squire stopped. "Is that him?" A dirty white bulldog with a large black head was running in a wide circle around them. Charles whistled and the dog approached. Half-starved and dirty all over, it appeared to have made a long journey.

"By rights, I should shoot it. It'll worry the cattle and kill our dogs. It could easily pull down a sheep."



WORD POWER

dilapidated – in ruins; falling apart

melancholy – depression; sadness

coma – a state of deep unconsciousness

epitaph – words on a tombstone, often summing up a person's life

nigh – nearly; almost

odious – hateful; repulsive

Though he didn't say so aloud, Charles was struck by how much the bulldog looked like his father. "I'll tell the gamekeeper to keep an eye on it," he said.

Charles and Cooper continued on their way. The dog followed, and although they tried to shake it off, it would not go away.

In the graveyard, Cooper unlocked the iron door of the Marston family chapel. Generations of Marstons were buried here, each in a separate grave covered by a flat gravestone with an epitaph. But over old Squire Toby's grave, there was nothing to be seen but a mound of earth.

"It does look shabby," said Charles. "It's the elder brother's business to put a stone

there. But if he won't do it, I will. And I'll have it chiselled into the stone that Scroope neglected his duty."

They strolled round the cemetery. It was nearly dark, but for a red glow in the sky from the setting sun. When Charles peeped again into the little chapel, he saw the bulldog stretched out upon Squire Toby's grave, straining, writhing, and rubbing its jaws in long caresses over the ground. Charles and old Cooper watched with a mixture of disgust and astonishment. Finally, the Squire hit the dog hard with his walking stick. The dog leaped up, snarled, then glared at him with furious green eyes. But the next moment, it was crouching at its new master's feet.

"It's not to come in here again," said the Squire. Then, stooping down and patting it, he added, "But it's a good dog and I like it."

"Well, I don't like it at all," said old Cooper, "and I shouldn't wonder if it is a demon of some sort."

Despite Cooper's warnings, the Squire kept the dog. At night, it slept in the gun room. During the daytime, it accompanied Charles wherever he went.

The fonder his master grew of the dog, however, the less Cooper and the other servants liked it. "I think Master Charlie be blind, takin' that cur under his roof," Cooper growled.

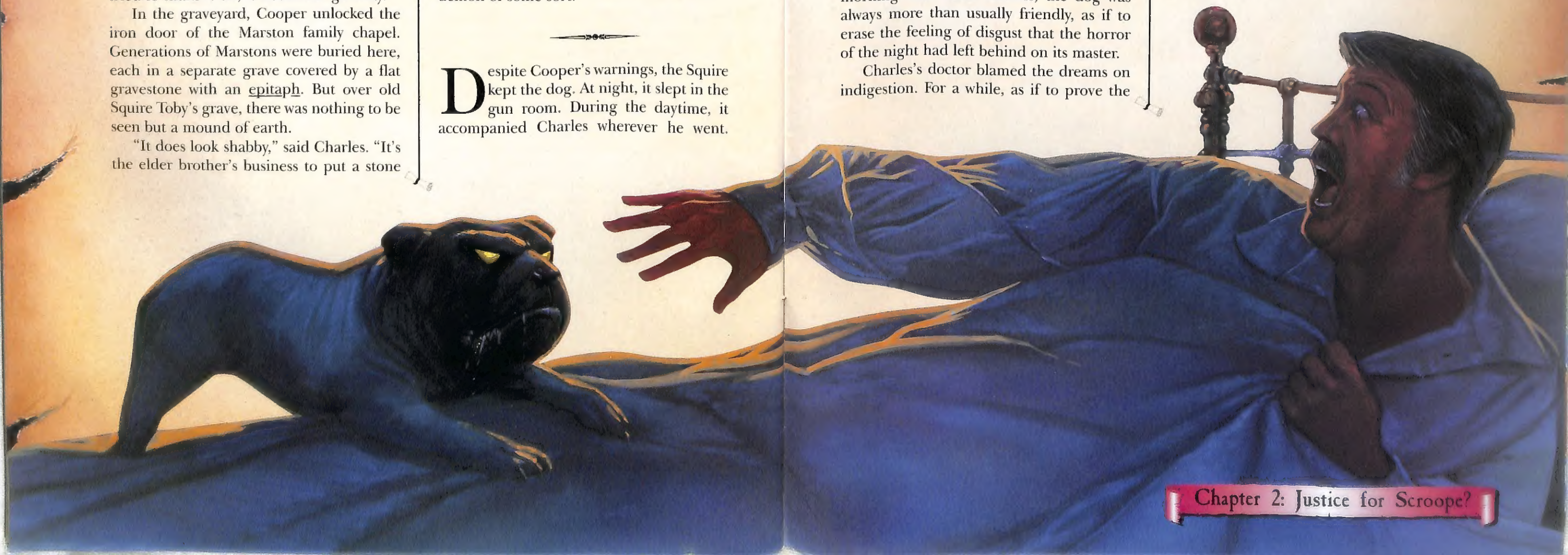
Dreams and nightmares began to trouble the Squire's sleep. In these, his dog played a central part. Often, the dog – looking horribly like the old Squire Toby – sat at the foot of Charles's bed, talking about Scroope. He would tell Charles 'all isn't straight', and that he 'must make it up wi' Scroope', that he, the old Squire, had 'served him an ill turn', and that 'time was nigh up'.

Then, this half-dog, half-man crawled up Charles's body and lay its face on his, with the same odious caresses and writhings as it had demonstrated on the old Squire's grave. Charles often woke up screaming, in a cold sweat, certain he could see something white sliding off the end of the bed. The morning after these dreams, the dog was always more than usually friendly, as if to erase the feeling of disgust that the horror of the night had left behind on its master.

Charles's doctor blamed the dreams on indigestion. For a while, as if to prove the

doctor right, the dog stopped appearing in dreams. But one night there came a vision that was to prey upon Charles's mind to the end of his days.

In the darkness, Charles heard the faint clatter of claws on stone as the dog walked from the door to his bed. Peering down towards the foot of the bed, the Squire saw a pair of green eyes staring at him. He could not look away. Then he heard what he was certain was his father's voice say, "The eleventh hour be passed, Charlie, and ye've done nothing. You and I have done Scroope a wrong! The time's nigh up." And, with a long growl, the man-dog began to creep up over his feet. The growl continued and Charles saw the dog's vivid green eyes drawing nearer, as it began to stretch itself up his body and crawl towards his face.



A pair of frightened fairies found the monster bash too much for them. They are hiding together somewhere in the ballroom – but where?

FINE ART FAKE?

The party host is very proud of this painting, claiming that it is more than 300 years old and therefore very valuable. However, one of the guests has spotted three things in the picture that convinced him the picture is a fake. Can you see what the three things are?

WICKED WAX PROBLEM

The demon decorator has been told to arrange 10 candles on the table so that there are five rows, with four candles in each row. Some of the candlesticks can be in more than one row. How can this be done?

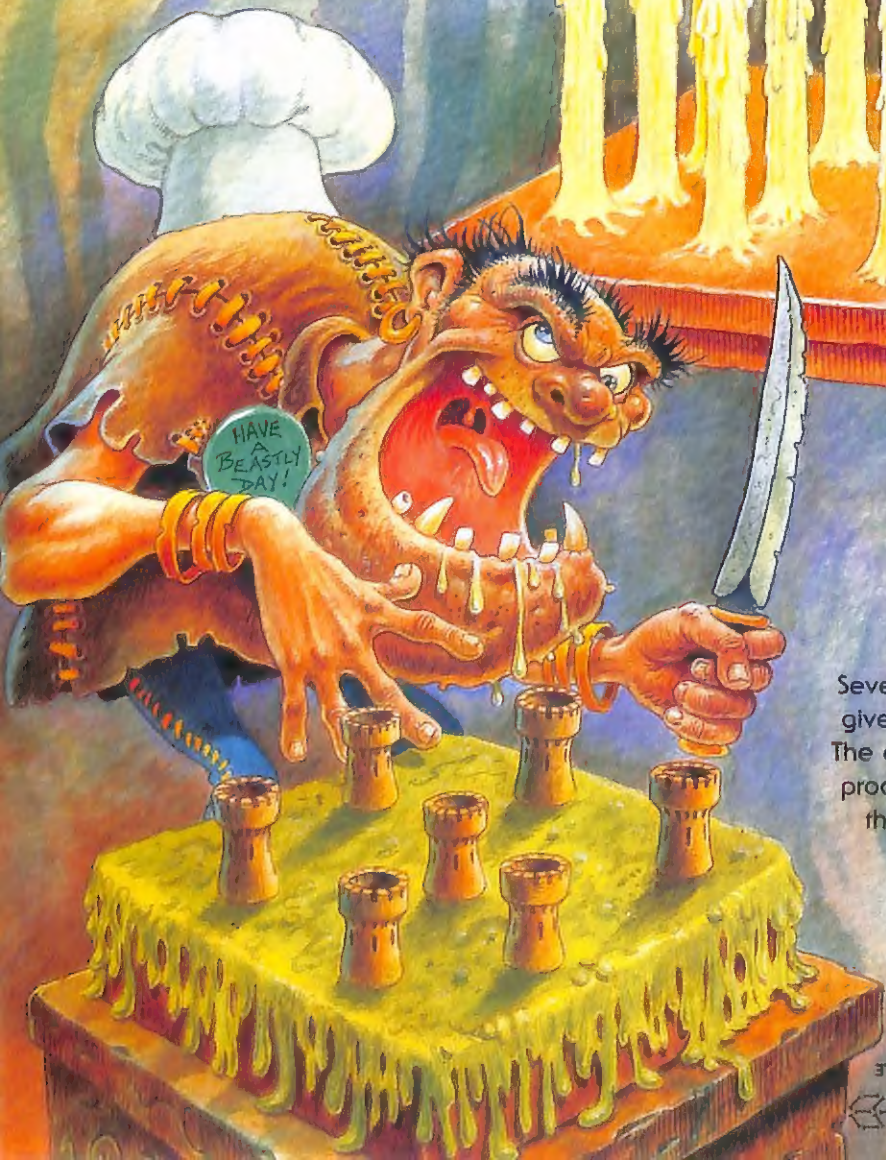


FLAMING FACT

In days gone by, an item to be sold by auction was sometimes 'sold by the candle'. A pin was stuck into a candle an inch from the top. The candle was then lit and bids were taken while the candle burned. The last person to bid before the pin dropped was declared to have bought the item.

NOT A PIECE OF CAKE!

Seven VIP super-spoofs each need to be given a piece of cake with a turret on it. The chef has been told that it's possible to produce the pieces with just three cuts of the knife. Can you help him to do it?



ANSWERS



RAIN OF TERROR

Over the centuries, showers of strange objects or animals have fallen from the skies on to the heads of terrified and astonished people around the world. Turtles, snakes, frogs, fish, crabs and even frozen ducks are just a few of the unlikely things which have fallen. Some people have even been lucky enough to be caught in a shower of money – although coins dropped from a great height can be pretty painful!



WEATHER OR NOT?

Weird things can fall from a clear blue sky, not just in rain or thunderstorms. Scientists usually blame such falls on powerful weather conditions.

A massive tornado or whirlwind can whizz along at 500kph, picking up anything light, such as small frogs. A waterspout can be hundreds of metres high. It can empty a small harbour of all its water and fish, as once happened in Norway. But no one can say why other things, such as stones, sand or plants, don't get picked up and fall at the same time. Neither can anyone explain how the creatures which fall are clearly alive and well. Surely they would have been killed if they'd been exposed to the awesome force of a whirlwind or tornado?

▲ NATURE'S RAW POWER
Could the enormous forces of
tornadoes and whirlwinds
cause the skyfalls?



◀ 16th-CENTURY ILLUSTRATIONS

Far left: the rain of blood which fell on Lisbon, Portugal, in 1551. Left: the fish that fell on Basle, Switzerland.

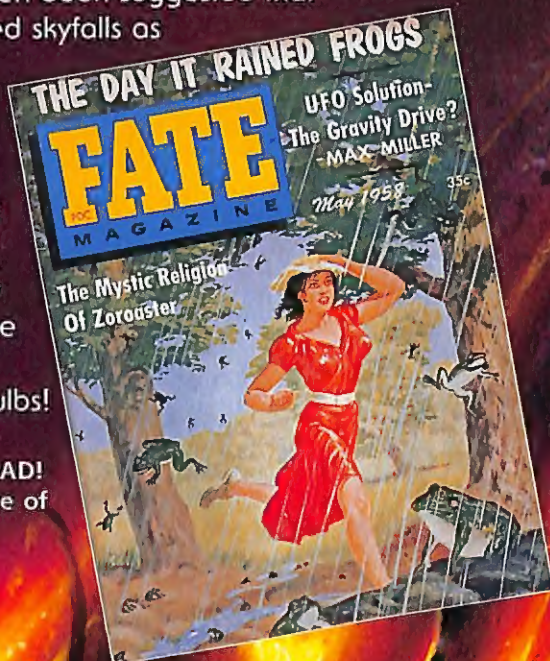
VARIOUS THEORIES

Charles Fort, an American born in New York in 1874, spent a quarter of a century collecting stories about weird skyfalls. He suggested that there might be some kind of layer round the earth, in which all these things are somehow held in suspended animation until the time when they eventually fall to Earth.

Others think these falling things may have come from another dimension or a parallel world. More recently, it has even been suggested that aliens have caused skyfalls as they swept out old research material from their spacecraft! In the absence of any real answers, perhaps we'll just have to wait to be illuminated by a shower of light bulbs!

► COVER THAT HEAD!

The May 1958 issue of Fate magazine.



▼ FROGFALLS

Plastic frogs were used in this picture, but real frogs hop away happily after their adventure!



FALLING PUZZLERS

Here are some of the more unusual skyfalls. Many fell long before the age of aviation, so they were not dropped from passing aircraft!

Bergen, Norway 1578: Huge, yellow mice fell.

Magdeburg, Germany 1642: Burning sulphur fell, causing fires, panic and hot debate.

Port-au-Prince, Haiti 1786: A heavy shower of black eggs rained down. It is not known whether they hatched!

San Francisco, USA 1851: Beef rained down on cityfolk! Vegetarians were not amused.

Memphis, USA 1877: Live snakes, nearly half a metre long, fell in their thousands.

Meschera, Russia 1940: Silver coins dropped.

Arkansas, USA 1970: Frozen ducks fell on townsfolk, who cooked them for dinner!

Bristol, England 1977: A shower of ripe hazelnuts fell on a couple in March, although the nuts aren't ripe in England until September.

Southampton, England 1979: Over 25 showers of mustard and cress seeds, then peas, maize and haricot beans, fell on three neighbouring houses.

Another day, broad beans cannoned through a front door every time it was opened! The house owners planted the seeds and reaped a terrific crop!